

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are pending. Claims 1, 9, 18 and 19 are independent.

Reconsideration and allowance of the above-identified application are respectfully requested. Applicant notes with appreciation the allowance of claims 8 and 13 if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, claims 8 and 13 have been amended to place them into independent form including their base claim and any intervening claim(s). Claims 1, 9, 18 and 19 are amended herein for reasons stated below.

In the Office Action, claims 1-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,555,299, to Maloney et al (hereinafter referred to as the Maloney et al patent). Applicants respectfully submit that the Maloney et al patent fails to teach or suggest several claimed features of the invention.

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the courtesy of an interview with the inventor and the undersigned on January 26, 2006. As discussed in more detail below, the independent claims 1, 9, 18 and 19 were discussed during the interview. Further, the inventor demonstrated a commercial application of the invention, that is, its use in a "511" traveler information service provided in Virginia.

During the interview, the undersigned stated that Maloney et al patent does not disclose a system capable of maintaining a transaction session with an application or data source such as a server even if no client device is connected at that moment to the session pertaining to the transaction. The present invention, on the other hand, allows a client device to initiate an interaction session to commence a transaction session, to terminate the connection that constitutes the interaction session before completing the transaction session, and to establish another connection with the same or other client device to continue the transaction session. This was demonstrated during the interview by the inventor using his mobile phone to dial a "511" traveler information service implemented using the invention, requesting directions, terminating the connection, and then establishing another connection by dialing "511" again, and then continuing to obtain directions from the point when the previous call or connection

was terminated. Claims 1, 9, 18 and 19 have been amended to more clearly recite this aspect of the present invention. During the interview, the Examiner indicated that claims 1, 9, 18 and 19 would be allowable if amended to have some of the limitations of allowable claims 8 and 13 pertaining to establishing a connection and client interaction session to initiate a transaction session, maintaining the transaction session after the client interaction session and connection are terminated, and continuing the transaction session when another connection is established.

The undersigned stated during the interview that the flow chart in Fig. 5 of the Maloney et al patent, on the other hand, shows that a call is never terminated during a transfer between customer service representatives (CSRs) (see blocks 112 and 144). This is also clear from the operation described in column 9, lines 7-45 of the Maloney et al patent wherein a customer call is transferred from a CSR1 to a CSR2 without the call ever being terminated.

During the interview, the undersigned directed the Examiner's attention to the invention exemplified in Figs. 1 and 3 of the application comprises a session management gateway (SMG) between a user voice and data devices and a back-end application 9 or data server 10, respectively. The SMG is operable to maintain transaction session data independently of the client device(s), the business logic employed upstream of the SMG, and the back-end (i.e., the application or information site or back end data server), as recited in claims 9, 18 and 19. For purposes of illustration, the undersigned then compared Fig. 2 of the Maloney et al patent with Figs. 1 and 3 of the application. Unlike the invention, the system disclosed in the Maloney et al patent has no device like an SMG between the front end (e.g., the private branch exchange (PBX)) and a customer service representative (CSR) workstation 54. The Maloney et al patent teaches a method of saving a customer's data spoken to a CSR into a database under a unique identifier, and then passing that identifier around to different CSRs as the call is transferred. This technique relies on a human being to accomplish the business logic (e.g., interact with the customer) and, as part of that interaction, store the customer's data into a database. The combination of

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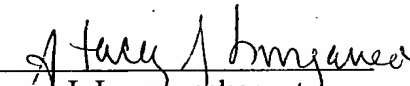
the CSR (i.e., agent), the software that the CSR/agent is using, and the database can be considered one back-end system. To accomplish state preservation, this back-end system, and namely the agent(s) or CSR(s), must store each step of the transaction itself. Thus, the call data and transfer data is not stored independently of the information site of the CSR, the business logic or caller/CSR interaction, the client device or caller, and the access medium employed by the caller. In the Maloney et al patent system, the CSR(s) is aware that he must maintain the customer information. The present invention, by contrast, does not require the back-end application to have responsibility for state preservation.

Accordingly, withdrawal of 35 U.S.C. §103(a) basis for rejecting the claims 1-24 is respectfully requested.

In view of the above, it is believed that the application is in condition for allowance and notice to this effect is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner

have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,


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